


AI And Student Creativity in Higher Education Classrooms: Enhancement, Imitation, Or Illusion?

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like Chat GPT, Gemini etc, which are readily available to the student community are increasingly changing the way students write in Indian Higher Education. Though we know that AI is credited for enhancing generation of ideas, fluency in language, and learner confidence, still there are concerns on originality, complete dependence and homogenisation of text and creative output. The present study examines whether use of AI genuinely enhances student creativity their imaginative capacity or just produces a kind of illusion and perceived effect of creativity due to the algorithmic intervention.

The study uses a mixed method approach, the research draws on survey responses from undergraduate students, short creative writing tasks with and without the intervention of AI and also teacher perceptions from the teacher teaching English. Quantitative findings suggest there is increased confidence in the students, their vocabulary bank and the structural coherence in AI assisted writing. On the other hand qualitative findings reveals lower creative experimentation, uniform thematic patterns and loss of personal tone.

The study argues that, the use of AI does not inherently weaken creativity, rather there is a redefining of creativity from the act of writing toward cognitive activities like idea formulation, prompt structuring and reflective interpretation. Thus, AI does not suppress creativity in students it is recalibrated. The paper concludes with pedagogical recommendations for ethically integrating AI into language classrooms in Bharat and proposes a AI guided creative learning a human – machine partnership that balances assistance with originality.

Key Words: Artificial Intelligence, Creativity, Idea Generation, Human- Machine partnership

Introduction

Today, Artificial Intelligence has rapidly entered the classrooms spaces, redefining and reshaping pedagogical practices. In Indian Higher education classrooms, AI tools have enabled students to engage in AI assisted writing for assignments, reports, projects and other creative tasks. Although these tools offer great opportunity to the students for language enhancement and in generating newer ideas, they also challenge the traditional view of creativity.

If we talk about creativity, we will agree that since ages it has been associated with originality, imagination, the personal voice of the narrator as well as narrative distinctiveness, using original expressions and intellectual risk taking. Writing, particularly in the English Classrooms has been observed by the teachers as a task where the students negotiate their identity and thought as well as the way they express. If the students use AI generated text, it totally disrupts this age old framework. If the students get AI generated poems, essays, articles ,stories within seconds, what will happen to students creativity? Will it be enhanced, reduced, or transformed?

The present study examines these questions within the Indian higher education context. In the study the researcher, instead of taking a celebratory or an alarmist stance prefers to adopt a balanced stance to understand AI's role in shaping and blossoming the creative practice. Thus the focus of the research is not just on the technological capability alone but on pedagogical impact and intellectual engagement.

2. Rationale and Research Problem

Whenever there are discussions in the staffroom regarding the entry of AI in the field of education, it often oscillates between two extremes: some look at it with full tech optimism and others have academic anxiety

Supporters of AI argue that it supports the students by giving a structure to their thoughts, it expands vocabulary, improves grammar and helps in generating ideas. On the other hand, Critics of AI warn that over dependence on AI will kill the intellectual curiosity, students will become passive and it may also lead to homogenisation of expression.

From the perspective of Indian classrooms, this tension is particularly important. Even today, many students are first generation English learners who expect structured language development support. At the same time, higher education institutions expects academic integrity and originality. There is very less empirical research from Indian Humanities classrooms examining how AI affects writing specifically.

Therefore, the central research problem is:

Is AI truly making students more creative, or are they depending on structured outputs or is it creating an illusion of originality?

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of AI tools on student creativity in writing tasks in English Classroom..
2. To compare AI-assisted writing with independently produced writing.
3. To analyse student perceptions regarding creativity and confidence.
4. To explore faculty perspectives on originality and authorship.
5. To propose a pedagogical framework for responsible AI integration.

4. Research Questions

The paper tries to analyse the following research questions:

1. Does AI use increase students' creativity and confidence in creative writing?
2. How does AI support influence originality and narrative individuality?
3. Do AI-assisted texts exhibit greater linguistic fluency than independent texts?
4. How do teachers perceive the relationship between AI and creativity?

5. Hypotheses

H1: AI-assisted writing demonstrates higher linguistic fluency than independent writing.

H2: Independent writing exhibits stronger authorial voice or identity and imaginative variation or experimentation.

H3: Students perceive AI as enhancing creativity, while teachers maintain cautious or mixed views.

6. Review of Literature

6.1 AI in Education

Recent research and deliberation highlight the impact of the advent and expanding role of AI in the education field. Studies suggest that using AI tools can increase learning proficiency and also reduce writing anxiety particularly in non-native speakers of English as the tools provide everything in matter of seconds.

6.2 Creativity and Writing

Many educational theorists believe that real creativity develops when students are allowed to wrestle and struggle with various ideas and when they think in different directions. Thus, it takes effort to be creative. In writing, creativity involves imaginative capability, stylistic experimentation and intellectual freedom.

Researchers in education argue that creativity cultivates when learners endure through challenges and explore multiple ways and possibilities.

6.3 AI and Creative Production

Recent research also suggests that AI generated or assisted writing follows a peculiar structure which are derived from large data sets having statistically probable patterns. There is no doubt that these patterns ensure coherence, however, it can also produce formulaic structures and thematic convergence. Some researchers argue that creativity may move from producing text to designing prompts and refining the outputs given by AI tool.

6.4 Research Gap

Though there is a global discourse among researchers regarding the impact of using AI assisted text in the classroom and its impact on students overall thought process, there is limited empirical research on AI's impact within Indian undergraduate humanities classrooms. Thus, this study contributes context specific insights to the conversation on creativity and use of AI.

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data.

7.2 Sample

The study involved:

- 60 undergraduate students from Arts and Commerce streams
- 5 faculty members from the English department

Convenience sampling was employed.

7.3 Data Collection Tools

The following Data collection tools were used for the research. Student Survey, Creative Writing Tasks and faculty interviews were conducted to understand the and measure the frequency of AI use and other research questions.

Student Survey:

A structured questionnaire was administered to the students who were a part of this research to understand and measure frequency of AI use, their perceived creativity, their confidence levels and ethical awareness regarding AI use.

Creative Writing Task:

Students were asked to complete two short narrative tasks. In Task one the students were asked to write independently without using AI assistance. In the second task the students were given permission to write with AI assistance.

Faculty Interviews:

Faculty teaching English were interviewed to explore perceptions of originality, authorship, and pedagogical implications of using AI in writing tasks.

Data Analysis

The researcher analysed the quantitative data using descriptive statistics (percentages and mean comparisons) and qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis.

8. Findings

8.1 Student Perceptions

The analysis of the students' perceptions of using AI for assistance revealed the following:

68% of the students reported that AI increased their confidence in writing.

72% of the students felt that use of AI improved their vocabulary and expression.

More than half i.e., 54% admitted that they are partially dependent on AI for idea generation.

When asked whether AI can be termed as a replacement, majority of the students described AI as a *starting point* rather than a *replacement*.

8.2 Linguistic Fluency

When AI assisted text was analysed it demonstrated the following with respect to Linguistic Fluency:

- The AI assisted text showed greater structural coherence
- The grammar used by the students in the AI assisted text was improved
- Expanded lexical variety was observed in AI assisted text.

This supports Hypothesis 1.

8.3 Originality and Narrative Voice

When Independent text was analysed, it revealed the following:

- The text had greater imaginative variation. The students used their imagination more than what the AI assisted text had provided them in the earlier task.

- The references which were used by the students were more culturally grounded, It showed Indianness in the references. As the students were more accustomed to Indian references, there was originality in using such references in the non AI assisted text. Due to such usage the text seemed more relatable, authentic and organic. For example, treating guests as gods, mention of Indian festival like Diwali, Holi etc, examples of resilience from the Indian working class, Characters from Ramayan and Mahabharat were also used in non-AI assisted task.
- Unique and distinct stylistic markers were used by the students largely influenced by native Indian languages for example the usage of progressive tense for habitual actions: “I am liking it very much”, She is having many friends, Colloquialism and code mixing was used by the students, tag questions were not used, instead, ‘Na’ or ‘Na’ was used. Indian English vocabulary was used, for example, ‘Pass out of college’, ‘what is your good name’, ‘out of station’ etc.

On the other hand, when AI -assisted texts were analysed, first of all, the text was extremely polished and it displayed the following:

- Predictable narrative arcs: The text showed common narrative structures and lacked originality; it also displayed some patterns which can be easily recognised as machine generated. Moreover, it was observed that the sentence length was uniform and the intros and conclusions were also standardised. Common idioms and common cause and effect chains were observed in AI assisted writing.
- Similar thematic framing: The AI text was observed to have binary framing like bright or bleak , light or dark, AI usually was found to use the rule of three, to frame thematic elements in writing, the writing showed a lot of padding and seemed unnatural
- Reduced risk-taking in plot development: The plot development was seen to be simple and linear in many texts written by students with AI assistance.

This supports Hypothesis 2.

8.4 Faculty Perspectives

Most of the teachers in their interview expressed the acceptance of incorporating AI in creative writing, but were at the same time extremely cautious about its use. Though they acknowledged AI’s usefulness for drafting and editing, but, they observed the following concerns regarding:

- Dilution of authorial identity: The teachers were of the opinion that there was very little trace of authorial identity in the text, there was no independent author’s voice in the text due to which the text seemed to be unnatural and monotonous. The text was not able to put forth the opinion of the author as the authorial identity completely got diluted
- Uniformity in student submissions: More or less most of the students submissions looked uniform and thus did not seem to be original. The text was stereotypical and all submissions looked alike.
- Challenges in assessing originality: There were multiple challenges that the teachers faced to assess originality of the content.

Hypothesis 3 was partially confirmed.

9. Discussion

The findings of the research suggest that use of AI does not eliminate creativity but it shifts its locus. Instead of using creativity for directly composing a poem or writing a story, it helps in ideation, planning, use of apt vocabulary and refinement of the text. Students are able to learn how to give correct prompts, they are able to select the right output given by the AI and are also able to use their creativity to modify the AI generated text, there by being more present in the process of writing. However, when students do not use their own critical angle of looking at the AI generated text,

and do not reflect on the output and use as it is, Creative agency diminishes and becomes limited and there is no increase in creative output of the student. Thus, in conclusion, AI can be seen as the best collaborator and not a substitute.

10. Pedagogical Implications

Guided AI Integration

Educators should encourage their students to use AI for getting new ideas, brainstorming, looking at a variety of options, designing clear prompts, but AI should not be used for final submission. Educators can also discuss the drafts written by Students and AI assisted drafts in the classroom.

14. Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence presents both opportunity as well as challenge for Indian higher education. Educators must look at the entry of AI in the classrooms and in the notebooks of students as an opportunity and not as a threat to creativity. Educators must recognise that AI has a potential that can transform the students. Creativity is not killed or extinguished due to AI; in fact, it is recalibrated. The use of AI in creative writing tasks promotes conceptual clarity and direction, it increases the critical judgement and also helps the writer in modifying one's writing by reflecting on the text assisted by AI.

As Indian classrooms have linguistic and cultural diversity concerns, If the usage of AI in Indian classrooms is guided responsibly it can be looked at as an enabling tool. Educators should not resist the use of AI, instead should intelligently integrate it in day-to-day work. As the use of AI will amplify the imaginative power of the students rather than standardising it.

At the end, we as educators must realise that creativity is a human capacity. Use of AI may refine, stimulate and assist it, but the spark of originality will emerge from reflective and culturally grounded human thought and experiences.